

Emil Notti
Commissioner

P.O. Box 110800
Juneau, AK 99811-0800

www.commerce.alaska.gov



Angelina Burney
Special Project Manager
for Community Relations

907.269.8100

cell: 907.350.5451

angelina.burney@alaska.gov

Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 27, 2010

Contact: Deputy Commissioner Mike Black, #269-8100

No. 10-16

Operation Arctic Care serves rural Alaskans

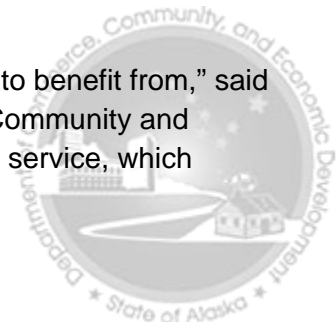
(Anchorage, AK) – A largely unheralded federal initiative is once again helping rural Alaskans get much needed medical, dental, optometric and veterinary care. For the 15th year, Operation Arctic Care brings military personnel to the state as part of the Pentagon's Innovative Readiness Training program. This year, the Kotzebue region was chosen for Operation Arctic Care.

In addition to providing health-care services to underserved rural Alaskans, Operation Arctic Care is a training exercise that tests the ability of Army, Navy, Air Force and active duty National Guard and Reserve units to deploy and operate as a team in difficult terrain under harsh weather conditions.

"Quality of life takes on a whole new meaning in off-road communities where geography and nature challenge delivery of even the most basic goods and services," Gov. Sean Parnell said. "The Pentagon's training investment in rural Alaska is significant, and the long-term benefit to our rural residents and their communities invaluable. We appreciate our military for their time and efforts here, and all the volunteers who help make it happen."

The operation employs the talents of 254 personnel from more than 80 military units working in full partnership with village leadership and Maniilaq, the regional health-care provider. This year, Operation Arctic Care has delivered more than \$2 million worth of health-care services to rural Alaskans at no cost. Additionally, the operation deploys teams to classrooms to teach about diabetes risk reduction, suicide prevention and awareness of domestic violence and substance abuse.

"This is an extraordinary program that Alaskans are very fortunate to benefit from," said Emil Notti, Commissioner of the state Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. "There is no measure for the value of this service, which



provides specialized medical care to rural Alaskans who would otherwise have gone without.”

It was the third visit of Operation Arctic Care to Kotzebue, which was the site of the first Arctic Care mission in 1995, as well as a second visit in 2007. The northwest Alaska villages of Selawik, Noorvik, Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Noatak, Point Hope, and Shungnak also received health-care services.

###